



*Serving Our Communities,
One Need At A Time*

Blue Valley Behavioral Health

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☐ **Polk County**
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☐ **Thayer County**
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February 10, 2010

Senator Ben Nelson
Federal Bldg. – Room 287
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln NE 68508

Dear Senator Nelson,

This letter is in support of Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network's (SNBHIN) request for earmarked funds which would assist in the purchase of Electronic Health Record (EHR) applications to more fully integrate the Health Information Exchange (HIE) system, currently in development for behavioral health providers in Southeast Nebraska.

I represent Blue Valley Behavioral Health, a rural private nonprofit provider of behavioral health services in 15 counties in Southeast Nebraska. An integrated health information exchange system will significantly improve our ability to treat Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions in a number of ways.

Attaining funding to help implement an EHR system that will benefit our rural organization in a variety of ways. It will allow us to better coordinate health and behavioral health information with other providers, especially with those individuals who have severe mental illnesses. We would be able to share information in a more expedient manner, improve transitions of care, provide electronic summaries of care to primary and behavioral health providers, and enhance the coordination when multiple organizations may be involved. Access to current information would also occur in emergency or crisis related situations, which would help ensure that the client in need is receiving the appropriate services.

BVBH has multiple rural offices that often require the transferring of client files when a client is seen in more than one office. It is quite difficult to coordinate this "file sharing" for a variety of easily identifiable reasons. In addition, a client's care can be hampered if the clinical records are not readily available to the provider. Having an EHR system would dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services due to the immediate access that providers would possess. Transportation and other expenses would also be reduced by having an adequate EHR system.

SNBHIN's leadership in the development of an EHR system has been aggressive and successful. National, state, and local funding sources have invested in the EHR system and still more funds are needed. We urge you to consider an earmark for this project, which will improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the behavioral health system in Southeast Nebraska, provide a roadmap for the adoption of an EHR system for the rest of the state, and most importantly improve the quality of life for Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions.

Sincerely,


Jon Day, LIMHP, LCSW
Executive Director

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